

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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O R 292216Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1751

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 3470

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, PORS, ES

SUBJECT: JULY 30 ANTI-GOVERNMENT MEMORIAL MARCH PLANNED

REF: (A) SAN SALVADOR 3042, 7/31/75

(B) SAN SALVADOR 3369, 8/21/75

1.BEGIN SUMMARY. A COALITION OF ANTI-GOVERNMENT GROUPS CENTERED IN THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY PLANS A FULL DAY OF MARCHES AND RALLIES ON JULY 30 TO COMMEMORATE A STUDENT PROTEST PARADE LAST JULY 30 THAT ENDED IN A VIOLENT CONFRONTATION WITH GOVERNMENT TROOPS AND THE DEATH OF UP TO A DOZEN STUDENTS. THE EMBASSY MIGHT COME IN FOR ITS SHARE OF MISCHIEF, PAINT AND ROCKS SINCE IT LIES ON THE PARADE ROUTE. GIVEN THE DELICACY OF THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE, AND EMOTIONALISM SURROUNDING LAST YEAR'S MARCH, WE CANNOT DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY OF VIOLENCE. OUR BEST ESTIMATE, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE EVENTS WILL OCCUR WITH MINIMAL INTERFERENCE TO THE COUNTRY'S PREPARATIONS FOR FIESTAS PATRIAS. THE EMBASSY WILL TAKE NORMAL SECURITY PRECAUTIONS TO MINIMIZE RISK TO PROPERTY AND ITS PERSONNEL. END SUMMARY.

2. A GROUP CALLING ITSELF THE "30TH OF JULY COMMITTEE OF
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POPULAR ORGANIZATIONS" (COP-JULY 30), CLAIMING A MEMBERSHIP

OF MOST OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES AND LEFTIST GROUPS WHICH TRADITIONALLY ALLY THEMSELVES AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT, ANNOUNCED IN LATE JUNE THAT JULY WOULD BE A MONTH OF "STRUGGLE AGAINST THE DICTATORSHIP" IN COMMEMORATION OF THE JULY 30, 1975 MARCH THAT ENDED IN A BLOODY CONFRONTATION WITH SECURITY FORCES AND THE DEATH OF SOME 10-12 STUDENTS (REFTEL A). SPORADIC NEWS-PAPER ADS THROUGHOUT THE MONTH HAVE INVITED PARTICIPATION BY, AND CLAIMED SOLIDARITY AMONG, REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS OF STUDENTS, CAMPESINOS, LABOR UNIONS AND ASSORTED LEFT-WING FRONTS, MOST OF WHICH LENT THEIR NAMES AND SYMBOLIC PARTICIPATION TO LAST YEAR'S PARADE. THE CLIMAX OF THIS MONTH'S ACTIVITIES (NONE OF WHICH TO DATE HAVE ELICITED THE SLIGHTEST ATTENTION) IS A PROGRAM OF EVENTS SCHEDULED FOR JULY 30, INCLUDING: AN AFTER-NOON MARCH RETRACING THE ROUTE FROM THE UNIVERSITY TO THE SITE OF LAST YEAR'S SHOOTOUT; A MEMORIAL SERVICE IN FRONT OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY HOSPITAL WHERE THE DEATHS OCCURRED; A LATE AFTERNOON RALLY IN THE CENTER OF SAN SALVADOR IN FRONT OF THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL; AND AN EVENING TORCHLIGHT PARADE FROM DOWNTOWN BACK TO THE SOCIAL SECURITY HOSPITAL.

3. THE LINE OF MARCH

WILL TAKE THE AFTERNOON PARADE PAST THE EMBASSY. LAST YEAR THE GROUP WAS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF 500 PARTICIPANTS, OVERWHELMINGLY UNIVERSITY AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. DATT HAS BEEN TOLD THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO KEEP ITS SOLDIERS IN THE BARRACKS (ALBEIT ON ALERT) DURING THE DAY. IF THE GOES REPEATS THE POLICY IT FOLLOWED FOR A SIMILAR MEMORIAL MARCH SHORTLY AFTER LAST YEAR'S PARADE (REFTEL B), IT WILL INFORMALLY WITHDRAW UNIFORMED POLICE AND SECURITY AGENTS FROM THE AREA SO AS NOT TO PROVIDE A CATALYST FOR CONFRONTATION. BASED ON THE BEST INFORMATION AVAILABLE, THE COUNTRY TEAM DOES NOT RPT NOT EXPECT THAT THE EMBASSY BUILDING WILL BE A SPECIFIC TARGET OF THE MARCHERS. HOWEVER, SINCE: THE PARADE WILL PASS THE EMBASSY FRONT DOOR; THE UNIVERSITY RECTOR'S OFFICE IS DIRECTLY ACROSS THE STREET AND MIGHT PROVOKE A DEMONSTRATION THERE; AND A GOOD NUMBER OF THE MARCHERS CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE PHILOSOPHICALLY ANTI-GRINGO, WE DO FORESEE A POTENTIAL FOR ANTI-US SIGN PAINTING AND ROCK THROWING. WITH THE EMBASSY A LIKELY "TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY", WE PLAN TO MONITOR THE PROTEST AND AT THE FIRST INDICATION OF TROUBLE, BATTEN DOWN THE HATCHES AND TAKE

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OTHER PRECAUTIONS AGAINST PROPERTY AND PERSONAL DAMAGE. SINCE FRIDAY, JULY 30, IS THE LAST DAY OF BUSINESS BEFORE THE WEEK-LONG FIESTAS PATRIAS HOLIDAYS, THESE SECURITY MEASURES SHOULD PROVOKE LITTLE NOTICE OR ALARM. COMMENT. NORMALLY DIFFICULT TO PREDICT, THE POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE AND DISRUPTION OF THIS PROTEST MARCH ARE UNUSUALLY HARD TO JUDGE. ARGUING FOR A PEACEFUL RESULT WOULD BE: (1) THE GOES DECISION NOT TO CONFRONT THE MARCHERS; (2) THE

DIFFICULTY THE LEFT NORMALLY HAS IN FORMING AN EFFECTIVE ALLIANCE OF OPPOSITION GROUPS (THE USUAL RESULT IS A UNIVERSITY ORGANIZED AND LED MARCH, WITH ONLY TOKEN PARTICIPATION BY THE LABOR, CAMPESINO, AND OTHER PARTNERS); (3) A LACK OF COHESIVENESS, AND OUTRIGHT DIVISIONS, WITHIN THE

STUDENT MOVEMENT; AND (4) TIMING THE DEMONSTRATION ON A FRIDAY BEFORE A LONG HOLIDAY. ON THE OTHER SIDE, ONE COULD CITE: (1) THE GENERAL JITTERINESS AMONG SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION (INCLUDING THE GOVERNMENT) AS A RESULT OF THE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED FIRST AGRARIAN REFORM PROJECT; (2) THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED MIGHT BE ABLE TO PARLAY THEIR MEMBERSHIPS' PENT-UP FRUSTRATION, THE RESULT OF LAST MARCH'S ELECTIONS AND THE LACK OF OUTLETS OF EXPRESSION SINCE, INTO AN UNEXPECTEDLY LARGE TURNOUT; AND (3) THE SUSCEPTIBILITY OF SUCH EVENTS TO OUTSIDE INFILTRATION AND AGITATORS PROVOKING GREATER THAN PLANNED VIOLENCE. LUBENSKY

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